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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/46/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/72 of 11 December 1990, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. 1/

2. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

3. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space considered the question of the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference during their 1991 sessions. Accordingly, the information contained in the present report reflects primarily the result of the work of the Committee, whose report is also before the General Assembly. 2/

II. WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

4. The Working Group of the Whole was reconvened by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its 1991 session in accordance with resolution 45/72, with a view to continuing to improve the execution of activities relating to international cooperation, particularly those included in the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and to proposing concrete steps to increase such cooperation and make it more efficient.

5. At its 1991 session, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole as contained in its report (A/AC.105/483, annex II), and recommended that the Working Group of the Whole be reconvened in 1992 to continue its work.

III. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

6. In paragraph 17 of its resolution 45/72, the General Assembly requested all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to cooperate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. In that connection, the Committee noted with appreciation the participation in all stages of its work and that of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee by representatives of United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and other international organizations.

7. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), have extensive space-related programmes that are contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Details of these programmes can be found in the yearly reports of the Secretary-General on coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. The latest report (A/AC.105/470) contains an overview of the agencies' work programmes for 1991 and 1992.

8. The thirteenth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities is scheduled to be held in September 1991 at Geneva.

IV. STUDIES

9. In response to the requests of the fourth session of the Working Group of the Whole, the Secretariat prepared and submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its twenty-eighth session, in 1991, the following reports and studies: "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space - activities of Member States" (A/AC.105/470 and Add.1); "Applications of space technology to flood monitoring and control" (A/AC.105/472); "Cooperative arrangements in support of the implementation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications" (A/AC.105/473); "Report on economic aspects of strengthening and expanding national and regional data banks and establishing an international space information service as a coordinating centre" (A/AC.105/474); "Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space - actions by international organizations" (A/AC.105/475); and "Upper atmosphere studies for weather and environment monitoring" (A/AC.105/477).

10. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in endorsing the recommendations of the fifth session of the Working Group of the Whole, noted that they called for the preparation of further studies and reports of relevance to the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Committee endorsed in particular the Working Group's decision to make, at its next session, a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. It noted that the Secretariat, at the request of the Working Group, would be preparing a background paper, taking into account previous reports already prepared by the Secretariat, to assist the Working Group in that regard. The background paper will be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its next session, in 1992.

11. In addition, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group, the Secretariat will also be preparing for submission to the 1992

session of the Subcommittee the following reports and studies: a report containing information from Member States on their national and cooperative international space activities, on their space activities subject to greater international cooperation and on their resources and technological capabilities in the fields of space activities for the promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space; as well as technical studies on integrated land and water resources management for rural development; remote and rural area communications and broadcasting; forest resources management; desertification; and ocean resources development. (See also sect. VII, International Space Information Service.)

V. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS

12. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Conference that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be directed towards seven specific objectives. The activities conducted in 1990 by the Programme and the plans for the period 1991/92 to meet those objectives are contained in the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/478).

13. Activities carried out or planned under the Programme in 1991, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, include the following training courses, seminars and workshops: a United Nations/European Space Agency (ESA) Workshop on Basic Space Science, organized in cooperation with the Government of India and hosted by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO); a United Nations/ESA Workshop on Microwave Remote Sensing Technology, co-sponsored by FAO, in cooperation with the Government of Spain and hosted by the National Institute for Aerospace Technology (INTA) - Maspalomas Station; a United Nations international training course on remote-sensing applications for environmental assessment and monitoring, which will be held in cooperation with the Government of the United States of America at the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, United States. The course will focus on the multidisciplinary use of global data sets, including remotely sensed data for global change study and resources management (one of the United States contributions to the participation of the United Nations in International Space Year 1992); a workshop organized by the United Nations, FAO and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), at the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) at Nairobi, which will provide decision makers with a basic knowledge of remote-sensing technology and its utility in the management of natural resources and the environment in Africa; a United Nations Workshop on the Applications of Space Techniques to Combat Natural Disasters, co-sponsored by ESCAP and UNDRO, organized in cooperation with the Government of China and hosted by the State Science and Technology Commission of China in Beijing (China's contribution to the activities undertaken by the United Nations as part of International Space Year 1992); a United Nations/FAO/WMO/ESA Training Course on the Applications of Remote Sensing in Agrometeorological and Hydrological Studies, hosted by the Comisión Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Aeroespacial (CONIDA) in cooperation with the Government of Peru; the United Nations Workshop on Space Technologies

for Development, co-sponsored by the Government of Canada and the International Astronautical Federation, to be held at Montreal, Canada; and the Third United Nations Training Course on Remote-Sensing Applications to Geological Science, organized in cooperation with the Government of Germany, hosted by the Central Institute for Physics of the Earth, Potsdam, Germany.

14. In promoting the development of indigenous capability, the Programme will award 34 long-term fellowships (2 by Austria, 10 by Brazil, 2 by China, 16 by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and 4 by ESA) in 1991 for in-depth training of participants from developing countries in the areas of microwave technology; research and applications in remote-sensing technology; research and training in geodesy, photogrammetry and remote sensing; cartography and aerial photography; scientific instrument manufacturing; theoretical and experimental astrophysics; systems and methods of space information processing; the Earth's rotation and lithosphere plate movement using space technology; optical-electronic instruments for remote sensing; monitoring of the Earth's resources and its environment; space antennae and propagation; remote-sensing information systems; satellite meteorology; and communications systems. All of these fellowships have been renewed for the 1991/92 period.

15. In 1992, the following training courses, seminars, conferences and workshops are planned:

(a) The United Nations/United States International Conference on Satellite Remote Sensing for Resource Management, Environment Assessment and Global Change Studies: Needs and Applications in the Developing World, to be held at Washington, D.C., in May 1992;

(b) The seventh United Nations/FAO/WMO/ESA Training Course on the Applications of Remote Sensing in Agrometeorological and Hydrological Studies, for the benefit of developing countries from the ECA and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) regions;

(c) The second United Nations/Sweden Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators, to be held at Stockholm and Kiruna in cooperation with the Government of Sweden;

(d) The International Seminar on Satellite Communications, organized in cooperation with the Government of the USSR, to be held in Moscow;

(e) The United Nations/FAO/International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) Training Course on Remote Sensing Applications, to be held at Rome;

(f) The United Nations/UNESCO/WMO/ICTP Conference on "Bridging the Information Gap in Space Science and Technology", to be held at United Nations Headquarters;

(g) The United Nations/International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) Workshop on Data Analysis Methods and Applications, to be held during the XVIIth ISPRS Congress, Washington, D.C.;

(h) The United Nations Workshop on Remote Sensing, organized in cooperation with the Government of Japan, to be held in Ecuador;

(i) The United Nations/International Astronautical Federation (IAF)/Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) Workshop on Space Technology for Development - Making It Happen, Washington, D.C., 28-30 August 1992, in association with the World Space Congress.

VI. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

16. In paragraph 7 (g) of its resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982, the General Assembly decided that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should, upon request by Member States or any of the specialized agencies, be directed towards the provision or arrangements for provision of technical advisory services on space applications projects. With regard to that mandate, the Programme has provided or is providing assistance in the following areas:

(a) To ESA, as a follow-up to the United Nations/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/FAO/ESA Meeting of Experts on Remote Sensing and Satellite Meteorology Applications to Marine Resources and Coastal Management in the Atlantic Coast of Africa Region (1989). The Programme conducted a survey leading to the selection of specific projects in a number of African countries that are within the perimeter of the ESA Fucino and Maspalomas ground receiving stations in order that ESA could provide historical and future satellite data sets that could benefit the projects;

(b) To the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) Programme, by continuing to assist in the organization of pilot projects in the use of remote sensing for mapping and managing coastal resources;

(c) To ECA and the Governing Council of RCSSMRS, by assisting in carrying out a fact-finding mission at the Centre to assess its administrative and technical capabilities to provide adequate services to support the programmes and projects within its mandate; review its plans for the future; evaluate its expertise with a view to determining whether the needs of Member States could be met through such expertise; and assess its overall performance;

(d) To the Government of the USSR, as a follow-up of its offer to provide remote-sensing data to a number of developing countries as part of its contribution to the United Nations/International Space Year activities. The Programme has provided assistance in the planning and coordination of this ongoing activity;

(e) To the Centro de Levantamientos Integrados de Recursos Naturales por Sensores Remotos (CLIRSEN) of Ecuador, in the preparation of a workshop for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) region, in particular for the member States that are within the perimeter of its Cotopaxi

Remote Sensing Ground Receiving Station, in order to provide essential information on the importance of the station, its services and products to their social and economic development.

VII. INTERNATIONAL SPACE INFORMATION SERVICE

17. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly decided to establish an International Space Information Service, consisting initially of a directory of sources of information and data services to provide direction upon request to accessible data banks and information sources. With regard to that mandate, the International Space Information Service published the second volume of Seminars of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (A/AC.105/468), containing selected papers from the seminars, workshops and training courses of the Programme in 1990; an addendum to the list of experts in space technology and applications (A/AC.105/460/Add.1); and a report on the economic aspects of expanding and strengthening national and regional data banks and establishing an international space information service (A/AC.105/474). The Committee noted that a number of previous publications would be updated in 1992: the Directory of Education, Training, Research and Fellowship Opportunities in Space Science and Technology and its Applications (A/AC.105/432/Add.1); the Directory on Information Systems on Space Science and Technology (A/AC.105/397/Rev.1 and Add.1); and the list of experts in space technology and applications (A/AC.105/460/Add.1).

VIII. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

18. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly appealed to all Governments to make voluntary contributions, either in money or in kind, towards carrying out the recommendations of the Conference. In his note verbale dated 11 March 1983, the Secretary-General brought that paragraph to the attention of Member States, particularly with respect to the newly mandated and expanded activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Member States and intergovernmental organizations that responded to the appeal since the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly have been mentioned under appropriate headings in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. 2/ The Committee took note of the disappointment expressed by the developing countries at the lack of financial resources to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

IX. REGIONAL MECHANISMS OF COOPERATION

19. In pursuance of resolution 45/72, the Secretariat continued its efforts to strengthen the regional mechanisms of cooperation in carrying out various activities in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference, in particular those relating to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (see para. 16 (a) to (e) above).

20. In accordance with both the recommendation of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concerning the development of indigenous capabilities and resolution 45/72, which considered it particularly urgent that, among other things, the United Nations should support the creation of adequate training centres at the regional level, the Secretariat has also continued its efforts, undertaken as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in existing national or regional educational institutions in developing countries. The Secretariat has developed a project document (SAP/90/001-004) that is to serve as the instrument for the establishment of the regional centres and is continuing consultations with regional commissions and countries that have expressed interest in hosting such centres. In addition, the Secretariat is pursuing the question of the funding for the establishment of these centres in discussions with Member States as well as with UNDP and other regional and international funding institutions.

Notes

1/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/46/20).